

Washington, DC -- In recognition of a career long commitment to the arts and the environment, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) will be honored on Saturday, July 21 by the Woodstock Film Festival with its Second Annual Spirit of Woodstock Award.

"I am very honored to receive the Spirit of Woodstock Award from an organization as distinguished and respected as the Woodstock Film Festival," Hinchey said. "As the state and federal representative for Woodstock -- one of the greatest artist colonies in America -- I've spent the past 38 years working to provide resources to advance the arts and ensure our painters, musicians, dancers, filmmakers and all other artists receive the proper attention and support from their government. Additionally, it's important to note that the Woodstock Film Festival has long had a strong commitment to environmental causes, which of course, are near and dear to my heart. I am grateful for this honor and hope to carry on the 'Spirit of Woodstock' after I leave office."

Hinchey has been a strong supporter of the Woodstock Film Festival's Youth Initiative/Youth at Risk program, which is designed to give underserved high-risk youth the opportunity to learn and participate in the filmmaking field. The congressman has previously secured \$30,000 in federal funds for the program. Through educating high-risk youth and giving them the tools and the knowledge to create, represent, and present their own films while learning from industry professionals, the Woodstock Film Festival has sought to open the doors of a creative outlet for expression and professional growth. Hinchey has also been a strong supporter of the Hudson Valley Film Commission, which helps facilitate film production in the region, helps attract positive attention to the area and boosts the local economy.

"The Woodstock Film Festival is not only a highly respected festival internationally, but has also been an incubator for regional talent and an enormous economic engine for the area, bringing thousands of people and film production to the Hudson Valley," Hinchey said. "I am very humbled that they've chosen to honor me for my work."

The Spirit of Woodstock Award, which will be presented by actor Aidan Quinn, celebrates the roots of the Hudson Valley -- its natural beauty, iconoclasts, art, culture and the river that flows through and connects it.

Hinchey has represented the Hudson Valley for all of his 38 years in public office, including 14 years as Chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee in the New York State Assembly where he authored numerous laws enhancing and protecting the region's precious resources and landscapes. He has also served on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, which funds the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, the National Gallery of Art, and various other artistic programs. The congressman has repeatedly fought for strong funding in support of arts programs in New York and across the country.

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